

# Strategic Research Clusters

## Introduction

The University of Regina has emerged as a centre of excellence on a number of research fronts. Based upon research impact, critical mass of highly qualified personnel, distinctiveness, and commitment to partners in the community and the Province of Saskatchewan for high impact research, the University identifies and **establishes**<sup>1</sup> strategic research clusters.

Strategic research clusters are critical to the University's success. The University will prioritize research resources and develop new funding partnerships that align with the strategic research clusters.<sup>2</sup>

In keeping with good governance, this guideline provides for the identification, establishment and disestablishment of University of Regina strategic research clusters.

## Guideline

### Purpose of Strategic Research Clusters

The purpose of the strategic research cluster is to enhance the University's reputation nationally and internationally. Strategic research clusters showcase the University's extraordinary research achievements and its capacity to make positive changes in society and to expand new knowledge. The desired impact includes acquiring more research resources and attracting undergraduate and graduate students nationally and internationally.

### Description of a Strategic Research Cluster

A strategic research cluster is an informal assembly of researchers in a common area of investigation who, collectively, have demonstrated continued research excellence according to the following criteria:

1. Research impact
2. Critical mass of highly qualified personnel
3. Distinctiveness

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<sup>1</sup> Inclusion of the strategic research cluster in the University's strategic plan defines establishment.

<sup>2</sup> University of Regina Strategic Plan 2015-2020: peyak aski kikawinaw Together We Are Stronger

4. Commitment to partners in the community and the Province of Saskatchewan for high impact research.

## **Funding**

Strategic research clusters have access to funding through the process driven and transparent Research Cluster Collaboration Fund:

- \$50,000 is available for seed funding for highly innovative projects
- \$25,000 is available for highly innovative non-cluster oriented projects ( via President's Research Seed Grant).

## **Duration of Strategic Research Clusters**

Strategic research clusters are expected to have longevity.

## **Special Advisors to the Vice-President (Research) - Research Clusters**

Strategic research clusters fall under the authority of the Vice-President (Research).

Up to two Special Advisors to the Vice-President (Research) – Research Clusters will be appointed for each cluster. The duties and responsibilities of the Special Advisor include:

- provide expertise to the Vice-President (Research) with respect to the strategic research cluster
- promote the strategic research clusters.

Special Advisor involvement will include:

- alignment of cluster with industry needs
- input to specific requests (e.g. funding initiatives, international opportunities)
- representation on a Working Group that will provide input on the Strategic Research Plan (monthly meeting).

Special Advisor appointments are restricted to faculty members.

## **Office of Record**

The Office of the Vice-President (Research), or its designate, will hold copies of relevant documents related to the strategic research clusters.

## Processes

### Establishment of a New Strategic Research Cluster

Formal recognition in the University's five year-strategic plan and subsidiary five-year strategic research plan defines **establishment** of a new strategic research cluster.

Over the time period bounded by the current strategic plan, new concentrations of research excellence may emerge and show potential to become recognized as a strategic research cluster. The Office of Vice-President (Research) will work with the associated faculty and researchers to determine if these new concentrations meet the criteria for a strategic research cluster. These candidates will be deemed "emerging clusters" over the period of the current plan and may be recognized and established as strategic research clusters in the University's next strategic plan.

The following are the steps to establish a new strategic research cluster:

1. The establishment process may be initiated in one of two ways:
  - a. A faculty researcher may bring to the attention of the Vice-President (Research) a potential new concentration of research excellence; or,
  - b. Based upon regular reporting on the University's research enterprise, the Vice-President (Research) may detect a potential new concentration of research excellence.
2. The Office of the Vice-President (Research) in collaboration with researchers completes the foundation documentation (described below).
3. The Vice-President (Research), in consultation with the Special Advisors, reviews foundation documentation and makes a decision to establish an emerging research cluster.
4. Performance of the emerging cluster measured against the four qualifying criteria is monitored over the remaining period of University's current strategic plan.
5. Prior to the initiation of the University's strategic planning cycle, the relevant authority, in consultation with the Council Committee on Research, reviews the performance of the emerging cluster and forwards a recommendation to establish a new strategic research cluster to Executive of Council.
6. Executive of Council approves the establishment of a new strategic research cluster and the relevant authority informs the Board of Governors within the existing research reporting framework.
7. The new strategic research cluster is reflected in the University's five-year strategic plan.

## Foundation Documentation

Foundation documentation is essential input to the establishment of a new research cluster. The documentation should be complete enough to justify the recognition of a new cluster. At a minimum, the documentation should include:

- name of the research cluster
- description of the research cluster
- explanation of what makes this research cluster a leader
- description of the research impact attributed to cluster
- description of the critical mass of highly qualified personnel that contribute to research within the cluster
- description of the interdisciplinary nature of research / researchers associated with the cluster.

Once a new research cluster is established, the foundation documentation should be viewed as a living template and ongoing guide.

## Disestablishment of a Strategic Research Cluster

Exclusion of a strategic research cluster from the University's strategic plan defines **disestablishment**. A strategic research cluster may be disestablished if performance related to one or more qualifying criteria declines. The relevant authority may recommend disestablishment, giving due consideration to consultations with the relevant Special Advisor(s), the Council Committee on Research, and key institute or centre partners.

## Reporting

Strategic research clusters shall report on activities through regular consultation between the Special Advisors and the Vice-President (Research). The Vice-President (Research) will incorporate research cluster related reporting within quarterly reporting to Board of Governors and other stakeholders as appropriate.

## **Internal Review**

The Office of the Vice-President (Research) in collaboration with the Special Advisor is responsible for preparing an in-house review, at minimum, at the end of each five-year strategic plan cycle. Unless otherwise mutually agreed by the Special Advisor and the relevant authority, an internal review is based on all of the qualifying criteria specified in the foundation documentation.

Upon receipt and consideration of the in-house review, the relevant authority may:

- approve the internal review;
- request further information; or,
- recommend disestablishment of the strategic research cluster.